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## *Solidarity, Cuban Style*

The chaotic windup of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity conference in Havana has made one thing clear: If there were no United States to hate, the Latin American Communists would have to invent one. Otherwise, they could never agree on anything.

Of course, the hateful figure of the imperialist Yankee nation is 99 percent fiction. And as every good Latin revolutionary knows, this straw man with the high hat, the chin whiskers and the pockets full of corrupting cash is responsible for all that is amiss in North and South America.

Except for the unanimous acclaim for this wonderfully satisfying substitute for progress and effective government at home, the 27 national delegations to Castro's convention were not exactly the model of solidarity. Two factions—the old-line Communists and the new breed of Castroesque revolutionaries—were at each other's throats from the word go. As the conference neared conclusion it looked for a while as if the old guard might walk out, splitting the united front down the middle.

The issue was the Cuban-inspired move to condemn Russia for her policy of trade with non-Communist nations.

In the end, after 42 hours of acrimonious debate, 15 delegations voted in the resolutions committee to join Castro in the curious exercise of biting the hand that hands out.

Clearly, the life of a Latin revolutionary is not an easy one. And it could get a lot harder in a hurry if Castro persists in his habit of giving the Russians the back of his hand at every opportunity. So perhaps we should not begrudge the Cubans and their fellow travelers on the rocky road to revolution their small pleasures. Let them parade the former Negro leader, Stokely Carmichael, and let them make the most of his paranoid anti-Americanism. Let them label the Organization of American States as "the putrid Yankee department of colonies." Let them fulminate about the CIA and American "penetration, intervention, subversion, occupation and political and economic hegemony." Let them threaten "to seize power through armed struggle" throughout the hemisphere.

It is, after all, understandable that the Cubans should try to blame everything on the United States. The alternative would be for Castro to face up to his own shortcomings. And that's more than anyone should be asked to do.